



# **NAVAL POSTGRADUATE SCHOOL**

**MONTEREY, CALIFORNIA**

## **THESIS**

**ANALYSIS OF WEST AFRICAN DRUG TRAFFICKING:  
THE DYNAMICS OF INTERDICTION AND STATE  
CAPACITY**

by

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March 2011

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**ANALYSIS OF WEST AFRICAN DRUG TRAFFICKING: THE DYNAMICS OF  
INTERDICTION AND STATE CAPACITY**

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## **ABSTRACT**

Illegal drug trafficking through West Africa has grown dramatically in the last decade, capturing the attention of U.S., European, and U.N. policymakers. Most countries in West Africa have struggled to adapt to the challenges drug trafficking has presented. A few countries, like Ghana, have made a more concerted and successful effort to confront the problem. This thesis seeks to test the hypothesis that variations in counternarcotics interdiction success Ghana and Guinea-Bissau can be explained by the level of state capacity and the ability to absorb international counternarcotics partnerships to deal with the problem. The findings of this study suggest the success of Ghana relative to Guinea-Bissau is explained by higher level of initial state capacity and its ability to absorb international assistance. The government of Guinea-Bissau, on the other hand, is caught in an incapacity trap that has thwarted its efforts towards narcotics interdiction. Efforts at international partnership in Ghana have a foundation of state capacity to build upon and a viable partner whereas in Guinea-Bissau assistance efforts have been relegated to correcting the utter lack of capacity in an environment of political-military instability where a viable partner in the War on Drugs has not yet emerged.

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## **LIST OF ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS**

AIRCOP:	Airport Communication Project
CPIA:	Country Performance and Institutional Assessment
CBT:	Computer Based Training
DEA:	Drug Enforcement Agency
DTO:	Drug Trafficking Organization
CPLP	Community of Portuguese Speaking Countries
ECOWAS:	Economic Community of West African States
FIU:	Financial Intelligence Unit
GPS:	Ghana Police Services
ICITAP	International Criminal Investigative Training Assistance Program
INCSR:	International Narcotics Control Strategy Report
INLEA:	International Narcotics and Law Enforcement Affairs
INTERPOL:	International Criminal Police Organization
IPAD:	Instituto Português de Apoio ao Desenvolvimento (Institute for Development Assistance)
JPCU:	Joint Port Control Unit
JP:	Judicial Police
MAOC-N:	Maritime Analysis and Operations Center-Narcotics
NACOB:	Narcotics Control Board
NIP:	National Integrated Programme
RAID:	Real-time Analytical Intelligence Database
SEACOP	Seaport Cooperation Programme
SIES:	Secure Information Exchange System
TCU:	Transnational Crime Unit
UNODC:	United Nations Office On Drugs and Crime
UNIOGBIS:	United Nations Integrated Peacebuilding Office in Guinea-Bissau
WACI :	West African Coast Initiative
WCO:	World Customs Organizations

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## I. INTRODUCTION

Illegal narcotics trafficking through West Africa grew dramatically, beginning in 2004 with cocaine seizures peaking in 2007, followed by an equally dramatic decline in drug seizures through 2009.<sup>1</sup> Though seizures have fallen significantly, experts believe that narcotics continue to flow through West Africa and trafficking is once again increasing as a result of drug trafficking organizations employing different transportation and concealment methods.<sup>2</sup> The shifts in West African narcotics trafficking patterns over the past six years have captured the attention of U.S., European, and U.N. policymakers. International law enforcement organizations, such as the International Criminal Police Organization (INTERPOL), the United Nations Office on Drug and Crime (UNODC), as well as local law enforcement organizations, have adopted a number of strategies to stem the tide of illegal drug trafficking. The counternarcotics strategies these organizations have developed are aimed at maritime interdiction of vessels inbound from Latin America, along with multilateral programs to build counternarcotics intelligence gathering capabilities and the ability to work more effectively with European law enforcement partners and military forces. Other initiatives are aimed at providing training, equipment and personnel for airport-based counternarcotics programs to intercept drug mules attempting to transport drugs to Europe by commercial air travel.

While drug trafficking activity surged and strategies were being put in place to ramp up the counter narcotics efforts, most countries in West Africa struggled to adapt to the challenges it presented. A few countries, like Ghana, have made a concerted effort to confront the problem, while others, like Guinea-Bissau, have not been able to mount successful counternarcotics programs. Ghana's efforts to control drug trafficking were recognized by U.S. Assistant Secretary for African Affairs, Johnnie Carson during a

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<sup>1</sup> United Nations Office On Drugs and Crime (UNODC), *World Drug Report 2010*. New York: United Nations Publications, 2010, 168–169.

<sup>2</sup> United Nations, *Report of the International Narcotics Control Board 2010*, New York: United Nations Publications, 2010, 48; “UN Highlights Rise of Drug Trafficking Routes Through West Africa,” *Lisbon Lusa News Agency (Portuguese)*, March 2, 2011; Flemming Quist interview with author.

February 2010 meeting with Ghanaian President John Atta Mills.<sup>3</sup> In contrast to Ghana, the U.S. Treasury Department highlighted the extremely problematic situation in Guinea-Bissau when it designated Navy Chief of Staff, José Americo Bubo Na Tchuto, and Air Force Chief of Staff Ibraima Papa Camara, as drug kingpins.<sup>4</sup> These discrepancies underscore the importance of researching why some countries appear to be having more success than others in addressing the problem of drug trafficking through West Africa.

In the decades since President Richard Nixon famously declared war on drugs, billions of dollars and an immeasurable amount of human resources have been dedicated to counternarcotics interdiction efforts. As the battle lines in the war on drugs have been drawn and redrawn, lessons have been learned regarding the effectiveness of interdiction methods and the best means of applying financial and human resources to control the problem. The shift in drug trafficking through West Africa represents a relatively recent trend that presents not only tremendous challenges but also opportunities. Among the challenges presented is the growing nexus between drug trafficking organizations and terrorist groups that indicate a willingness on the part of these groups to forge alliances that will allow both to operate more effectively.<sup>5</sup> Law enforcement and policymakers alike can benefit from in-depth analysis of the most effective approaches to interdictions that have been applied to the newest front in the war on drugs. Drug traffickers have proven to be highly adaptable and resilient in the face of law enforcement pressure. It is likely that illicit drug trafficking networks will shift routes and tactics again in the future and will continue to build alliances with terrorist groups as a force multiplier in response to increased law enforcement pressure.<sup>6</sup> The objective of this research is to provide an

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<sup>3</sup> The Ghanaian Times, "U.S. Hails Ghana's Track Record," Ghana Web, <http://www.ghanaweb.com/GhanaHomePage/NewsArchive/artikel.php?ID=176166>.

<sup>4</sup> "Treasury Designates Two Narcotics Traffickers in Guinea-Bissau," U.S. Department of Treasury Office of Public Affairs, Press Release, April 8, 2010.

<sup>5</sup> J. Peter Pham "Emerging West African Terror-Drug Nexus Poses Major Security Threat," *World Defense Review On-line*, January 28, 2010, (Accessed March 5, 2011) <http://worlddefensereview.com/pham012810.shtml>.; Jean-Pierre Filiu, "Al Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb: A Case Study in The Opportunism of Global Jihad," *CTC Sentinel*, no. 3, issue 4, 15.

<sup>6</sup> Tim Gaynor and Tiemoko Diallo, "Exclusive: Al Qaeda Linked to Rogue Air Network: U.S. Official," Reuters On-line, January 14, 2010, (Accessed March 5, 2011) <http://www.reuters.com/article/2010/01/14/us-drugs-security-aviation-exclusive-idUSTRE60D3Z720100114>.

analysis of counternarcotics interdiction efforts in West Africa and their relative successes and shortfalls in order to capture lessons learned from the variations in approaches to the problem. Furthermore, the increased knowledge of the effectiveness of efforts within West Africa that this research aims to highlight has broader implications to the overall development of counter narcotics strategies.

There is a debate in the literature on efforts to control illicit drug trafficking. The policy literature argues that supply-side reduction strategies are most effective, while the academic literature argues for demand reduction or a combination of supply and demand reduction strategies. The long-standing conventional view within policymaking circles is that crop eradication of coca, marijuana and poppy plants is an effective method of denying drug trafficking organizations the means to put drugs into the illicit trafficking networks.<sup>7</sup> The success of eradication efforts has been highlighted in numerous reports, the most recent of which showed a drop in production in Columbia in 2008 that corresponded with a record level of eradication effort.<sup>8</sup> Crop eradication is criticized by those outside the policy-making circles for its tremendous costs, damage to the environment, inability to suppress the drug supply over the long-term on a global scale and its failure to address the underlying political and socio-economic causes of

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<sup>7</sup> United State Department of State, Bureau of International Narcotics and Law Enforcement Affairs, "International Narcotics Control Strategy Report." (2010), 103, 212, 508; Liana S. Wyler, "International Drug Control Policy." Congressional Research Service. 16; Maria Celia Toro, *Mexico's War on Drugs, Causes and Consequences*, Boulder, Lynne Rienner Publishers, Inc., 1995, 12–13; Report of the International Narcotics Control Board for 2009. New York: United Nations, 2009, 124–125; LaMond F. Tullis, and United Nations Research Institute for Social Development. *Handbook of Research on the Illicit Drug Traffic : Socioeconomic and Political Consequences*. New York: Greenwood, 1991, 123–127.

<sup>8</sup> United State Department of State, Bureau of International Narcotics and Law Enforcement Affairs, "International Narcotics Control Strategy Report." (2010), 13-14, for example reported 39 % drop in Columbian "potential cocaine production" between 2007 and 2008 from an estimated 490 metric tons to 300 metric tons with a 29% percent reduction of areas under cultivation during the same period due to eradication efforts; United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC), *World Drug Report 2009*. New York: United Nations Publications, 2009, 197.

production, trafficking and consumption of illicit drugs.<sup>9</sup> Furthermore, it is argued that eradication efforts increase the likelihood of human rights violations, violent response from insurgent groups and alliances between insurgent groups and growers.<sup>10</sup> Felbab-Brown notes that eradication programs require the national government of the producing country to provide firm military control over its entire territory, to cooperate with international partners in eradication efforts and to exercise sustained control populations that are dependent on illicit crops for their livelihoods to ensure they do not revert to illicit crop cultivation. She argues that since it is very rare for all three of these conditions to exist in producing countries eradication programs have limited applicability.<sup>11</sup> Bartilow and Kihong argue that the collateral damage such programs inflict in terms of destruction of the livelihoods and civil rights of innocent populations and the increase in drug related violence makes the cost of such strategies unacceptable in many cases.<sup>12</sup> Eradication is, nevertheless, a pillar of the supply-side counterdrug strategies and it is argued that it can be successful by also providing alternative livelihoods schemes, crop substitution and rural development to preempt re-engagement in drug cultivation, production and trafficking.<sup>13</sup> However, in practice, alternatives rarely measure up to the level of effort and funding put towards eradication. Scholars point to

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<sup>9</sup> Testimony by Vanda Felbab-Brown before U.S. House of Representatives Domestic Policy Subcommittee of the Oversight and Government Reform Committee. The Design and Resourcing of Supply-Side Counternarcotics Policies. 2010, [http://www.brookings.edu/testimony/2010/0414\\_drug\\_funding\\_felbabbrown.aspx](http://www.brookings.edu/testimony/2010/0414_drug_funding_felbabbrown.aspx). (Accessed 19 April 2010); Wyler, Liana S. "International Drug Control Policy." Congressional Research Service. 16: Tullis, F. LaMond, and United Nations Research Institute for Social Development. *Handbook of Research on the Illicit Drug Traffic : Socioeconomic and Political Consequences*. New York: Greenwood, (1991), 123-127; Thoumi, Francisco E. *Illegal Drugs, Economy and Society in the Andes*. Washington, D.C.; Baltimore: Woodrow Wilson Center Press ; [Distributed by] Johns Hopkins University Press, 2003, 196–199.

<sup>10</sup> Phillip Coffin and Jeremy Bigwood, "Coca Eradication," *Foreign Policy in Focus*, 6, 7: 1-4; Jennifer S. Holmes, Sheila Amin Gutiérrez de Piñeres, and Kevin M. Curtin. "Drugs, Violence, and Development in Colombia: A Department-Level Analysis." *Latin American Politics and Society* 48, no. 3 (Autumn, 2006): 167, 180.

<sup>11</sup> Vanda Felbab-Brown, "Opium Licensing in Afghanistan: Its Desirability and Feasibility," Policy Paper, Brookings Institute, No. 1, August 2007, 4–5.

<sup>12</sup> Horace A. Bartilow, and Kihong Eom. "Busting Drugs while Paying with Crime: The Collateral Damage of U.S. Drug Enforcement in Foreign Countries." *Foreign Policy Analysis* 5, no. 2 (Apr, 2009): 93–95.

<sup>13</sup> Tullis, F. LaMond, and United Nations Research Institute for Social Development. *Handbook of Research on the Illicit Drug Traffic : Socioeconomic and Political Consequences*. New York: Greenwood, 1991, 231–234.

the inability of programs designed to provide viable alternatives to illegal crop cultivation and its lack of focus on the underlying economic problems as critical shortfalls of strategies that rely heavily on the supply-side dynamics of the drug trade.<sup>14</sup> Ironically, such programs while very well funded annually, do little to alleviate the burden that law enforcement faces in its attempts to interdict because overall levels of drugs in the supply-chain stabilize over time largely due to “balloon effect.”<sup>15</sup> However, this debate is largely irrelevant to West Africa, which has virtually no supply of locally cultivated cocaine and a limited demand for the narcotics that transit the region.<sup>16</sup>

Interdiction, which is relevant to West Africa, is another key element of supply-side narcotics control strategy, which faces criticism for its limited effectiveness. The U.S. State Department’s International Narcotics Control Strategy Report weighs in on the positive aspects of interdiction: “Successful targeting and interdiction of drug smuggling threats create a deterrent effect. Interdiction success causes Drug Trafficking Organizations (DTOs) to incur greater costs and decreased efficiency in moving their illicit product to market.”<sup>17</sup> Countering this, Fowler argues that “interdiction is unlikely to be effective as a strategy to ‘win’ the Global War on Drugs, if ‘winning’ means that drug suppliers are significantly reduced on a long-term basis, and with them, the number

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<sup>14</sup> Vanda Felbab-Brown, “Trouble Ahead: The Coccaleros of Peru.” *Current History* 105, no. 688 (Feb, 2006): 79–83

<sup>15</sup> Senlis Council. *Impact Assessment of Crop Eradication in Afghanistan and Lessons Learned from Latin America and South East Asia*. London: MF Publishing Ltd, 2006, 23. This report notes: “A further unintended consequence of eradication is often described as the “*balloon effect*,” involving the displacement of illegal production to more remote areas, where it is more difficult, to extirpate.” The definition of *balloon effect*, has been extended by some scholars to include conditions in which law enforcement efficacy at squeezing the balloon leads traffickers to shift their trafficking to routes with less law enforcement resistance.

<sup>16</sup> Ghana is a cultivator of cannabis that is mostly for local consumption as are several West African nations. Local demand for cocaine is growing, but still represents a miniscule market by comparison to the European consumer market, which is the ultimate destination for the majority of West African trafficked cocaine.

<sup>17</sup> United States. Dept. of State. Bureau of International Narcotics Matters. and United States. Bureau for International Narcotics and Law Enforcement Affairs. “International Narcotics Control Strategy Report.” (2010), 48.

of drug users and the power of the international drug cartels.”<sup>18</sup> By using dynamic modeling, he makes the case that interdiction is ineffective due to inelasticity of demand for drugs. His contention is that supply may be temporarily interrupted by interdiction and prices may increase slightly in the short-term, but drug cartels are not hurt to the degree policy-makers believe, and the more important drug trafficking node to hit is the drug trafficker’s source of capital.<sup>19</sup> Other scholars, such as Rodriguez-Beruff and Cordero, have also weighed in on this side of the debate from the context of the Caribbean drug transit zone. In underscoring the problems associated with a developing a successful interdiction strategy, they note that at “its most extreme this would involve the impossible task of building a ‘Caribbean barrier’ against illicit drugs, using police and military controls...This overlooks the complexities of the region, as well as those of the drug trade.”<sup>20</sup> Youngers and Rosin also point to the shortfall in demand reduction efforts, democratic development, and aid programs that are more likely to have a long-term impact on the underlying problems higher on the counter drug agenda than the purely repressive measures that garner short-term successes.<sup>21</sup> Policymakers, on the other hand take an enforcement first approach “to combating the corrosive impact of drug trade on societies.”<sup>22</sup> Not surprisingly, those in this camp point to the relative success of bi-lateral interdiction efforts such as the 2007 joint operation between the U.S. Coast Guard and the Panamanian Government that led to the largest drug seizure in U.S. history. On balance, policymakers concede that much more still needs to be done both within the law enforcement arena by improving coordinated interdiction efforts, as well as improving the rule of law and building capacity while also instituting economic development

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<sup>18</sup> Thomas B. Fowler, “The International Narcotics Trade: Can It Be Stopped By Interdiction,” *Journal of Policy Modeling*, 18, no. 3, (1996): 262; Van de Velde, “The Growth of Criminal Organizations and Insurgent Groups Abroad due to International Drug Trafficking,” *Low Intensity Conflict and Law Enforcement*, 5, no. 3, (Winter 1996): 467.

<sup>19</sup> Fowler, “The International Narcotics Trade,” 234, 262.

<sup>20</sup> Coletta Youngers and Eileen Rosin, *Drugs and Democracy in Latin America : The Impact of U.S. Policy*. Boulder, Colo.: L. Rienner, 2005, 303.

<sup>21</sup> Youngers and Rosin, *Drugs and Democracy*, 340–341.

<sup>22</sup> Colleen W. Cook, Congressional Research Service, *Mexico’s Drug Cartels*, [Washington, D.C.]: Congressional Research Service, Library of Congress, 2007, 20.



programs in the effected country.<sup>23</sup> Interdiction efforts in Mexico and transit countries of the Caribbean, for example, have both been highlighted by the GAO as successful law enforcement partnerships, but these reports readily admit that interdiction initiatives are in some cases falling far short of expectations, and there is still great deal of room for improvements across nearly all measures of effectiveness.<sup>24</sup> Although, Felbab-Brown has criticized eradication, she weighs in cautiously on the side of interdiction when it is sequenced properly in combination with other strategies, such as alternative livelihood and licensing programs. She notes interdiction is important “...to allow the state to prevent crime organizations from accumulating excessive power and threatening a country’s security, political integrity and the rule of law.”<sup>25</sup> But, she also warns that interdiction, like eradication, simply causes traffickers to seek an alternative path of least resistance in a weaker state with less effective law enforcement pressure and more remote unmonitored spaces to operate in, and thus is unlikely to actually reduce the drug flow.<sup>26</sup>

Because the policy debate remains at a very high-level of analysis, it generally does not consider the actual effectiveness of specific law enforcement efforts in particular contexts. The Government Accountability Office conducted a comprehensive study of counternarcotics efforts in eight drug transit zone countries during 2008 and noted “the effect of particular initiatives is often unclear, making it difficult to assess progress in

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<sup>23</sup> Cook, *Mexico's Drug Cartels*; United States. Government Accountability Office, “Drug Control U.S. Assistance has Helped Mexican Counternarcotics Efforts, but Tons of Illicit Drugs Continue to Flow into the United States : Report to Congressional Requesters.” U.S. Govt. Accountability Office.

<sup>24</sup> United States. Government Accountability Office, “Drug Control U.S. Assistance has Helped,” 17-18.; Statement by Jess T. Ford, Director of International Affairs and Trade notes that “the White House National Drug Control Policy (ONDCP) released a summary of a Southwest Border Strategy aimed at disrupting the flow of illegal drugs into the U.S., and cited recent cooperation as leading to substantial disruption of illegal drug flow into the United States.” Contradicting this, the same report notes: “DTOs operate with relative impunity in certain regions of Mexico, including areas along the U.S. Mexican border.”; “Drug Control U.S. Assistance has Helped Mexican Counternarcotics Efforts, but Tons of Illicit Drugs Continue to Flow into the United States : Report to Congressional Requesters.” U.S. Govt. Accountability Office, 1–3.

<sup>25</sup> Vanda Felbab-Brown, *Shooting Up : Counterinsurgency and the War on Drugs*. Washington, D.C.: Brookings Institution Press, 2010, 156–157; 177.

<sup>26</sup> Testimony by Vanda Felbab-Brown before U.S. House of Representatives Domestic Policy Subcommittee of the Oversight and Government Reform Committee. The Design and Resourcing of Supply-Side Counternarcotics Policies. 2010, [http://www.brookings.edu/testimony/2010/0414\\_drug\\_funding\\_felbabbrown.aspx](http://www.brookings.edu/testimony/2010/0414_drug_funding_felbabbrown.aspx). (Accessed 19 April 2010).

achieving agency goals, compare the relative effectiveness of their initiatives and make results-based decisions concerning resource allocations.”<sup>27</sup> The report does identify three conditions that hinder the effectiveness of interdiction efforts in the Caribbean transit zone: a transit country’s limited ability to sustain a counternarcotics program with the necessary funds, limited political support, and corruption.<sup>28</sup> Nevertheless, the GAO cautiously hails the relative progress of counternarcotics efforts in the Caribbean. However, others argue that these efforts are simply “squeezing the balloon,” forcing the highly adaptable drug trafficker to shift their trafficking routes to locations where there is less law enforcement pressure.<sup>29</sup> Many of the same elements that hinder drug interdiction in the Caribbean, according to the GAO report, such as limited ability to sustain counternarcotics operations, are present in many West African countries. As with the Caribbean zone, the balloon effect of higher levels of law enforcement effectiveness in the European consuming countries has created a niche for cocaine transshipment through West Africa where the risk of interdiction is much lower than attempting to reach Europe directly.

Like the Caribbean connection to North America, West Africa has recently grown into a lucrative transit point for narcotics destined for the burgeoning European cocaine consuming market. However, West Africa as a transit hub and the roles domestic and international efforts have played in addressing the problem has been much less well studied than the major transit countries that connect the Latin American cocaine suppliers

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<sup>27</sup> The eight countries studied by the GAO were: The Bahamas, the Dominican Republic, Ecuador, Guatemala, Haiti, Jamaica, Panama and Venezuela. United States, Government Accountability Office, “Drug Control Cooperation with Many Major Drug Transit Countries has Improved, but Better Performance Reporting and Sustainability Plans are Needed : Report to Congressional Requesters.” U.S. Govt. Accountability Office, 2008, 4.

<sup>28</sup> United States, Government Accountability Office, “Drug Control Cooperation with Many Major Drug Transit Countries,” 4-5. Transit zone countries were unable to fund fuel and maintain boats for maritime interdiction, Venezuela has ceased cooperation with U.S. counternarcotics programs in 2005, and other countries have undermined international operations due to law enforcement corruption.

<sup>29</sup> Liana S. Wyler, “International Drug Control Policy,” [Washington, D.C.]: Congressional Research Service, Library of Congress, March 8, 2010, 27.

to the United States.<sup>30</sup> This is largely because the rise of West Africa as a major cocaine transit hub is recent, as are the interdiction efforts to respond to the problem. A preliminary look at West Africa suggests that counternarcotics efforts have faced similar problems to those noted by the Government Accountability Office in its reports on the Caribbean. As West African narcotics seizure patterns went through cycles of surging then appearing to decline sharply as traffickers shifted tactics in response to law enforcement pressures, research has not kept pace with what law enforcement's role has been. This research effort seeks to fill this gap by explaining variations in the counternarcotics interdiction programs in two West African nations that have been profoundly affected by the surge in transshipment activities.

This thesis analyzes variations in drug interdiction patterns within West Africa. It argues that successful counter drug trafficking in West Africa has been dependent upon a sound domestic interdiction strategy, significant degree of international partnerships, and most importantly enough state capacity, including law enforcement, the judicial system, and the administrative apparatus, to ensure that strategy is translated into interdiction success. More specifically, the hypothesis of this research is that variations in counternarcotics interdiction success in Ghana and Guinea-Bissau are explained by Ghana's higher initial level of state capacity, which allowed it to absorb international counternarcotics assistance effectively while Guinea-Bissau's lower initial level of state capacity prevented it from doing so.

The thesis will use a comparative case study method to study interdiction efforts in two of the main north and south entry points within West Africa, Ghana and Guinea-Bissau. Both countries are similarly situated geographically in a zone that provides ample opportunities for drug traffickers to operate clandestinely using a variety of maritime, commercial airline and over land trafficking methods. Furthermore, each country has limited resources, skills and personnel to apply in confronting the challenges of being a drug transit zone. However, Ghana has had more success than Guinea-Bissau.

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<sup>30</sup> The Government Accountability Office has produced a comprehensive study of trafficking transit countries linking Latin America to the United States. "Drug Control Cooperation with Many Major Drug Transit Countries has Improved, but Better Performance Reporting and Sustainability Plans are Needed: Report to Congressional Requesters." U.S. Government. Accountability Office, 2008.

The independent variable (IV) is the capacity of the state, the intervening variable the effectiveness of bilateral or multilateral counternarcotics assistance programs involving domestic and international agencies, and the dependent variable the level of interdiction success. One would expect to see a noticeable increase in drug seizures as assistance from international partners increases, but only where initial state capacity is sufficient to absorb this assistance. State capacity is measured by the World Bank Country Performance and Institutional Assessment (CPIA) *Quality of Public Administration* indicator, which measures, “the extent to which civilian government is structured to design and implement government policy and deliver services effectively.”<sup>31</sup> Effectiveness of international partnerships, training and resources is measured by number of seizures before and after the initialization of an international partnership. Valid measures of the dependent variable are more problematic, as systematic narcotics trafficking data is limited. This study will use arrests/seizures in country (Ghana or Guinea-Bissau) as a percentage of all known arrests/seizures of drugs emanating from the country using the United Nations Office On Drugs and Crime (UNODC) biannual narcotics seizure reports. Where possible, data is provided in terms of number of seizures, arrests and weight. The primary measure of the (DV) is cocaine arrests/seizures, as this is the most reliable source of the surge in trafficking between 2005 and 2007. Heroin and cannabis will be considered in the overall narcotics seizure data analysis, but will not be individually analyzed.

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<sup>31</sup> Definition from the World Bank Development Indicators, found under data. The Country Policy and Institutional Assessment “is a diagnostic tool that is intended to capture the quality of a country’s policies and institutional arrangements—i.e. its focus is on the key elements that are within the country’s control.” The CPIA Quality of Public Administration measure is one of 16 Country Policy and Institutional Assessment Indicators that falls under the Public Sector Management and Institutions cluster <http://go.worldbank.org/EEAIU81ZG>. (Accessed January 21, 2011).

## II. GHANA

This chapter will advance the argument that Ghana's higher initial level of institutional capacity has allowed it to be relatively more successful in absorbing international drug interdiction assistance and thus in counternarcotics interdiction. This chapter will first look at interdiction as the measure of the dependent variable. The impact of the independent variable of state capacity upon interdiction as measured by the World Bank Country Performance Institutional Assessment (CPIA) Quality of Public Administration indicators will then be discussed followed by international partnerships.

### A. NARCOTICS INTERDICTION GHANA

Cocaine, cannabis, and heroin trafficking through the country began to grow exponentially starting in 2004–2005..<sup>32</sup> Ghanaian law enforcement had a landmark year arresting suspects for drug related offenses in 2004.<sup>33</sup> This included the largest drug seizure in West Africa up to that point, on January 7, 2004. The Narcotics Control Board (NACOB) and the Ghana Police Services (GPS) Drug Enforcement Unit, acted on a tip from British intelligence, seized 588 kilos of cocaine in the port city of Tema and arrested

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<sup>32</sup> Trafficking is not a new phenomena in Ghana. Cannabis cultivation and trafficking has been going on in Ghana dating back to the post-WWII era, particularly during times of economic crisis and continues to the present. Heroin and cocaine became part of the West African narcotics trafficking portfolio in the late 1980s as direct commercial flights were established between Ghana and Europe and law enforcement pressures were increasing on the commercial airline trafficking routes between Southeast Asia and Europe. The recent surge of cocaine trafficking through West Africa as a transshipment point was detected around 2004, when a combination of market forces due to higher demand and price for cocaine in Europe relative to the decline in the North American market, as well as increased North American law enforcement pressure. For early historical background and impact of Ghanaian Diaspora see: Emmanuel Akyeampong, "Diaspora and Drug Trafficking in West Africa: A Case Study of Ghana." *African Affairs* 104, no. 416 (Jul., 2005): 429-447. For the roots of cocaine and heroin trafficking see: Henry Bernstein, "Ghana's Drug Economy: Some Preliminary Data." *Review of African Political Economy* 26, no. 79; Africa and the Drugs Trade (Mar., 1999): 13-32. For an explanation of the shift in trafficking patterns see: United Nations Office on Drug and Crime, *Drug Trafficking as a Security Threat in West Africa*, report prepared by the Studies and Threat Analysis Section and the Regional Office for Western and Central Africa of UNODC, November 2008, 8–10.

<sup>33</sup> The U.S. State Department's International Narcotics Control Strategy Report for 2005 indicates "Overall, saw the highest number of drug trafficking arrests on record." Further noting that between January and September of 2004, 705 drug related arrests were made nationwide in Ghana. This data is problematic because it does not indicate how many arrests were made interdicting traffickers and how many were part of NACOB's demand reduction/deterrence measures aimed at users. Also, the INCSR for 2003 does not innumerate the number of arrests nor the quantities of drugs seized, so it's impossible to know the magnitude of the improvement over the previous years.

six suspects.<sup>34</sup> The suspects were later convicted and sentenced to long prison terms. Overall, however, Ghana was unsuccessful at reducing drug trafficking in 2004 (Figure 1). Latin American drug traffickers were increasing the flow of cocaine through Ghana to Europe using mules travelling through Accra's Kotoka International Airport (KIA), air cargo, postal shipments and over-land routes through neighboring countries. Figure 1 shows that only 5.6% of the drug cases of Ghanaian origin reported to the UNODC were stopped by domestic law enforcement officials in Ghana while the remaining 94.4% were made by foreign officials in destination countries.<sup>35</sup>

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<sup>34</sup> U.S. Dept. of State, INCSR, 2005, 536; Note: the following article lists the quantity seized as 674 kilograms rather than the INCSR figure of 588. "Biggest Cocaine Bust in Africa, Happens at Tema," Ghanaweb, January 7, 2004: <http://www.ghanaweb.com/GhanaHomePage/features/artikel.php?ID=49444>. (Accessed January 16, 2011).

<sup>35</sup> In terms of the total numbers, 14 of the 252 drug seizure cases of Ghanaian origin that were reported to the UNODC were interdicted in Ghana whereas the remainder were reported as primarily in the United Kingdom. These seizures were reported in updates to biannual seizure reports through 2006. See: United Nations Office for Drug Control and Crime Prevention, Supply Reduction and Law Enforcement Section, *Bi-Annual Seizure Reports 2004/1- 2006/2: Summary of Individual Significant Seizures of Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances, as Reported by Governments*, Vienna: United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime.

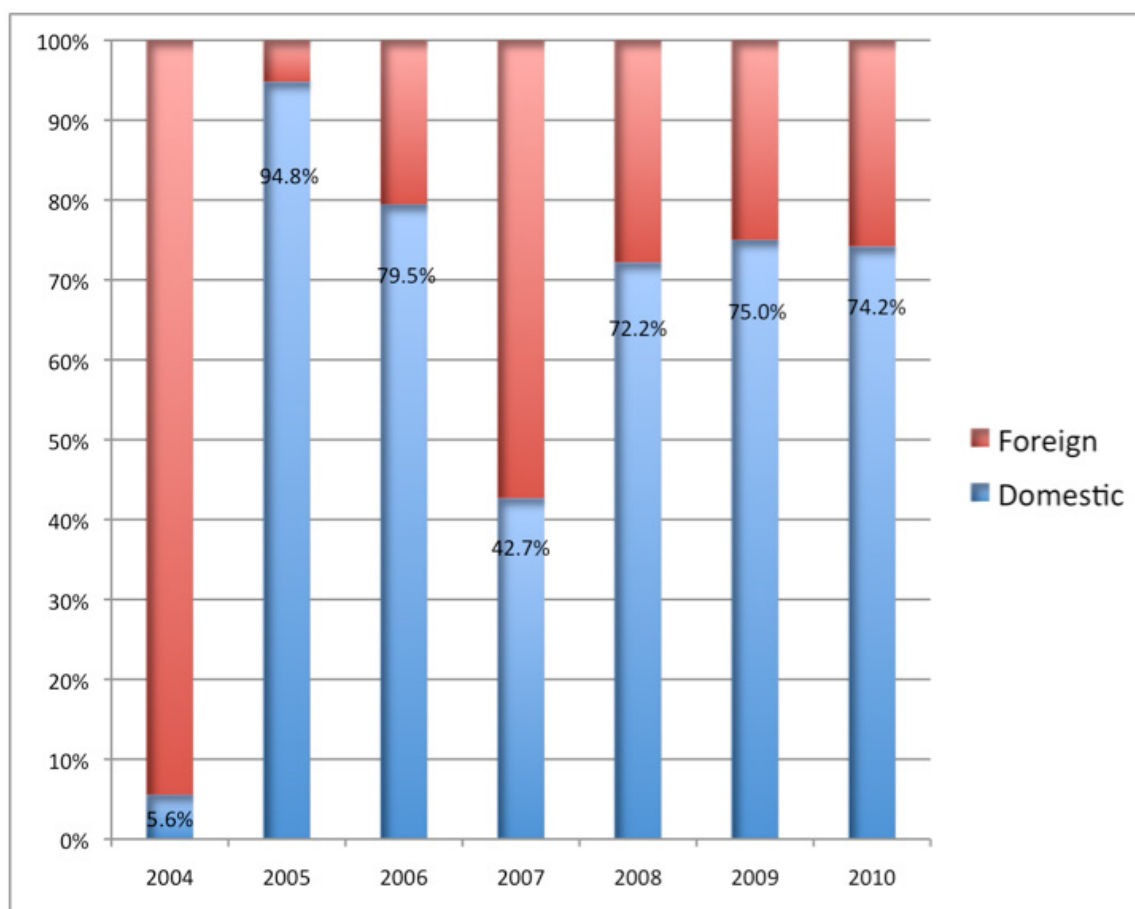


Figure 1. Ghanaian Drug Cases Seized Domestically Vs. Foreign<sup>36</sup>

However, in 2005 local interdiction improved dramatically, with 94.8% of the reported cases of Ghanaian origin were stopped domestically and only 5.2% in destination countries. In 2005, Ghanaian law enforcement stopped 73 individual cases leading to the arrest of 82 suspects. 65 of these cases occurred at Kotoka International Airport against only 12 cases interdicted at KIA the previous year.<sup>37</sup>

<sup>36</sup> Comparison of known seizures of Ghanaian origin made domestically vs. those reportedly made in foreign countries based on multiple reports from: United Nations Office for Drug Control and Crime Prevention, Supply Reduction and Law Enforcement Section, *Bi-Annual Seizure Reports 2004/1 through 2010/1: Summary of Individual Significant Seizures of Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances, as Reported by Governments*, Vienna: United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, 2004-2010. Additional drug seizure statistics for the period 2006-2010 provided by the DEA, Accra, Ghana. The figure for 2010 is based on preliminary data from UNODC Bi-Annual Seizure Report 2010/1 and Operation Westbridge data sheets provided by DEA, Accra, Ghana.

<sup>37</sup> Comparison of UNODC, Bi-Annual Drug Seizure Reports, 2005-1, 2005-2 and updates to 2005-1 published in the first report of 2006.

In 2006, Ghana again had one of the largest drug seizures in West Africa up to that point: 1,900 kilograms, seized in the small fishing village of Phrampram.<sup>38</sup> This large drug seizure owes more to happenstance than a systematic coastal counternarcotics operation. This is an often cited criticism of African interdiction operations because very few coastal interdiction efforts were systematically being carried out. On the other hand, beyond this large seizure, Ghana was beginning to establish a pattern of interdicting narcotics. In 2006, 79.5% of the drug trafficking cases of Ghanaian origin reported to the UNODC in 2006 were stopped domestically against 20.5% that were made outside Ghana.<sup>39</sup> The lower interdiction rate in 2006 compared to the previous year was due to a combination of traffickers adjusting their modus operandi based on increased airport security measures, using a variety of transportation methods along with the extremely high volumes of cocaine that was being moved through the region. 2006 corresponded to one of the two largest surge years in cocaine trafficking through West African by comparison to the previous years.<sup>40</sup>

The interdiction success rate in 2007 dropped significantly, with only 42.7% of cases successfully interdicted in Ghana.<sup>41</sup> Given the rebound in success after 2007, it seems most likely that the 2007 dip was caused by the continuing surge in cocaine trafficking that year. Of the 80 metric tons of cocaine seized in European destinations in 2007, 34%, or an estimated 27 metric tons, were of African origin.<sup>42</sup> 2007 was also the

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<sup>38</sup> UNODC, *Drug Trafficking as a Security Threat in West Africa*, Published by UNODC Studies and Threat Analysis Section and Regional Office for West and Central Africa, November 2008, 12.

<sup>39</sup> This equates to a total number of drug seizures for 2006 of 58 with 15 cases of known Ghanaian origin interdicted outside the country. *UNODC, Bi-Annual Drug Seizure Report, 2006-1 through 2007-1* (to include updates to previous reporting periods).

<sup>40</sup> More than 14 tons of cocaine of West African origin was seized in 2006, eclipsing the totals for all other years. See: UNODC, *World Drug Report 2010*. New York: United Nations Publications, 2010, 168–169.

<sup>41</sup> The number of suspect apprehended at KIA, did, in fact increase from 40 suspects to 70 after the introduction of Operation Westbridge, but overall the percentage of cases interdicted in Ghana dropped relative to those cased interdicted elsewhere.

<sup>42</sup> Data provided from this source analyzed the region and the continent as a whole but was not country specific. See: United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, *World Drug Report 2010*. New York: United Nations Publications, 2010 167–169.



peak year for the highest percentage of drug mules of West African origin detected in Europe. In the second quarter of 2007, 59% of all couriers apprehended in European airports, came from West African airports.<sup>43</sup>

In 2008, the domestic interdiction rate improved to 75%, and remained consistent thereafter (72.2% in 2009 and 74.2% in 2010).<sup>44</sup> In each of these years, Ghanaian law enforcement authorities made large drug busts. For example, in May 2008, Ghana Police Services seized 399 kilograms of cocaine through surveillance of a vehicle outside of Accra, resulting in the arrest and conviction of three suspects, who each received long prison sentences.<sup>45</sup> Despite the dip in 2007, the average domestic interdiction rate for 2005-2010 was 73%.

## **B. STATE CAPACITY**

Since 2005, Ghana has scored 3.5 out of 6 on the World Bank's Quality of Public Administration variables, significantly better than Guinea-Bissau's 2.5 and slightly better than the ECOWAS average of 3.0.<sup>46</sup> This allowed law enforcement in Ghana to make a positive impact against narcotics trafficking over the past five years, despite the involvement of high-level police officials in trafficking, as well as manpower and funding shortages. Relatively high state capacity has impacted interdiction mostly through better than average accountability.

The case of the Maritime Vessel Benjamin is illustrative. Despite the fact that NACOB and GPS officials had intelligence about the vessel's cargo and its impending arrival, 2300 kilograms of cocaine were offloaded from the vessel at Tema on April 26, 2006. Only the 30 kilos that remained on board the MV Benjamin were seized and later

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<sup>43</sup> United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, *Crime and Instability: Case Studies of Transnational Threats*, Report by Studies and Threat Analysis Section, Division for Policy Analysis and Public Affairs, February 2010, Figure 12, 17.

<sup>44</sup> UNODC *Bi-Annual Seizure Reports 2008/1 through 2010/1*. Note that the data for 2010 is an estimate based on the UNODC report for the first half of 2010 and seizures reported by Operation Westbridge.

<sup>45</sup> Mabel Aku Beneseh, "3 Jailed Over Cocaine," *The Daily Graphic (Ghana)*, July 10, 2010.

<sup>46</sup> World Bank, CPIA Quality of Public Administration Rating, under data, <http://data.worldbank.org/indicator/IQ.CPA.PADM.XQ> (Accessed January 21, 2011).

used as evidence, and five of those 30 later disappeared from police custody.<sup>47</sup> The remaining seventy-six parcels of cocaine were transported to an unknown location and were never recovered. On the surface, this shows that Ghana suffers from the same corruption and collusion with drug trafficking that has been an obstacle to effect interdiction in Guinea-Bissau (chapter three). However, the state's response to the MV Benjamin events shows the fact and impact of its greater capacity. In April 2006 five suspects including the owner of the vessel a second crew member and three Ghanaians were arrested for their involvement in transporting the cocaine from the MV Benjamin into Ghana. After a lengthy trial the five accused traffickers were convicted based on the remaining evidence and the testimony of thirteen prosecution witnesses, demonstrating judicial capacity to investigate and prosecute cases.<sup>48</sup> Three Ghanaian policemen who were involved in the disappearance of the cocaine once it was smuggled into the country were also convicted and sent to prison.<sup>49</sup> Additionally, two NACOB officials were suspended for dereliction of duty as a result of the missing evidence, and the NACOB Executive Secretary was ultimately relieved of duty, indicating capacity to sanction corrupt and/or incompetent officials. Furthermore, a committee chaired by Supreme Court Chief Justice Georgina Wood was convened to investigate the facts surrounding MV Benjamin case and the allegations of official involvement, demonstrating rule of law.<sup>50</sup>

These events stimulated a series of investigations and house cleaning efforts within the Ghana Police Services in 2007. Between April and October, 88 GPS officers were arrested and dismissed in a variety of cases involving official misconduct, corruption and attempts to sell confiscated narcotics or "retrieve parcels of cocaine along Ghana's coast near Takoradi."<sup>51</sup> In 2008 Ghanaian law enforcement continued to

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<sup>47</sup> U.S. Department of State, INCSR, 2007, 532.

<sup>48</sup> Stephen K. Effah, "125 YRS FOR 5 COKE DEALERS...In M.V. Benjamin Case" *The Ghanaian Times*, July 28, 2008 <http://www.modernghana.com/news/176160/1/125-yrs-for-5-coke-dealersin-mv-benjamin-case.html>. (Accessed January 17, 2011).

<sup>49</sup> U.S. Dept. of State, INCSR, 2009, 277.

<sup>50</sup> Georgina Wood Committee Report, Ghana Ministry of Justice, September 2006, 8 [http://www.mint.gov.gh/dmdocuments/geogina\\_wood\\_committee\\_report.pdf](http://www.mint.gov.gh/dmdocuments/geogina_wood_committee_report.pdf). (Accessed January 19, 2011).

<sup>51</sup> U.S. Dept. of State, INCSR, 2008, 563.

increase its interdiction capacity by re-structuring, expanding and replacing the top leadership. NACOB recruited new personnel bringing it to approximately 173 agents, decentralized its operations into specialty areas (such as demand reduction and enforcement), expanded outside its base in Accra to Tamale, Kumasi and Takoradi, and provided agents to assist with Operation Westbridge at Kotoka International Airport (see below).<sup>52</sup> In July 2009, newly-elected President John Atta Mills replaced the governing board of NACOB and appointed Yaw Akrasi Sarpong as the Executive Secretary to bring more credibility to the agency. To reduce incentives for corruption and collusion with drug trafficking, GPS increased officers' salaries, which were previously among the lowest in the civil service.<sup>53</sup>

In 2010, the GPS also rolled out a five-year strategic policing plan. The plan acknowledges that GPS like many of its African counter parts is resource constrained in personnel, equipment and training facilities. For example, as of 2008, GPS only had 1433 vehicles to serve 960 stations and posts across the country with 21% of the vehicles broken down leaving approximately one vehicle per post.<sup>54</sup> Though GPS has a National Police Training School, it does not have enough training capacity to indoctrinate the new recruits it hopes to add under the plan and it also lacks a training facility dedicated to a Criminal Investigation Division (CID). In assessing Ghanaian law enforcement capacity, a senior law enforcement official with the UNODC acknowledged that equipment and training levels of Ghanaian police are low but further stated that "taken in the African context Ghana's capacity is reasonable. In fact, they are in the top level in terms of

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<sup>52</sup> Emmanuel Bonney, "Shake-Up At NACOB," *The Daily Graphic (Ghana)*, June 27, 2008, <http://www.modernghana.com/news/171985/1/shake-up-at-nacob.html>. (Accessed January 19, 2011); NACOB personnel numbers: See (INCSR): Volume I Drug and Chemical Control, United States Department of State Bureau for International Narcotics and Law Enforcement Affairs, March 2010, 297.

<sup>53</sup> "The Police Benefit From Single Spine Salary Structure," Press Release, August 3, 2010, Ghana Government Official Portal, [http://ghana.gov.gh/index.php?option=com\\_content&view=article&id=2889:the-police-benefit-from-single-spine-salary-structure&catid=28:general-news&Itemid=162](http://ghana.gov.gh/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=2889:the-police-benefit-from-single-spine-salary-structure&catid=28:general-news&Itemid=162). (Accessed February 16, 2011).

<sup>54</sup> Ghana Police Service Five-Year Strategic National Policing Plan 2010-2014. Among the goals of the plan is to expand the force by 16,000 officers over course of 2010-2014. The previous strategic action plan in 2005 resulted in the growth of the force from 17,000 to its current level of 23,000. [http://www.ghanapolice.info/Gps\\_five-yr\\_strategic\\_plan.pdf](http://www.ghanapolice.info/Gps_five-yr_strategic_plan.pdf). (Accessed February 16, 2011)..

capacity relative to other West African countries.”<sup>55</sup> The five-year plan is aimed at improving the shortfalls in equipment such as vehicles along with information technology equipment, professional development, recruitment, training and infrastructure improvements to better support its officers. In addition to meeting the material and manpower requirements, an overarching goal of the plan is to restore its credibility in the wake of the MV Benjamin scandal.<sup>56</sup>

### C. INTERNATIONAL PARTNERSHIPS

This ability of NACOB and GPS to critically assess and address organizational weaknesses reflects the relatively high level of preexisting institutional capacity, and had a direct effect on interdiction effectiveness but also allowed the Ghanaian state to absorb international assistance, leading to even more interdiction effectiveness.<sup>57</sup> This international assistance has taken the form of many different programs such as: ICITAP training, drug surveillance equipment, Operation Westbridge, JPCU, and evidence storage facilities and prosecutorial capacity building programs.

In 2003, the United States government installed drug detection “itemizers” for counternarcotics surveillance operations at Kotoka International Airport.<sup>58</sup> Additionally, multiple agencies of Ghanaian law enforcement received training in two two-week courses in airport and seaport counternarcotics interdiction techniques through the United States Department of Justice, International Criminal Investigative Training Assistance Program (ICITAP) in November 2004.<sup>59</sup> This contributed to improving upon Ghanaian

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<sup>55</sup> Flemming Quist, Senior Law Enforcement Advisor, UNODC, Interview with author.

<sup>56</sup> GPS Five-Year Strategic Plan, 17

<sup>57</sup> The judicial and legislative sectors demonstrate similar levels of institutional capacity, which may serve to deter drug trafficking. An average of 40 drug trafficking cases have been successfully prosecuted annually since 2001 (based on U.S. Department of State data), while the legislature acted in 2007 to make it more difficult for narcotics traffickers to be granted bail and flee the country prior to prosecution. U.S. Dept. of State INCSR, 2004-2010; 2008, 565.

<sup>58</sup> INCSR, 2005, 536.

<sup>59</sup> The U.S. State Department provided funding for a U.S. Department of Justice, International Criminal Investigative Training Assistance Program (ICITAP). This provided a “train-the-trainer” program for 30 officers of the Narcotics Control Board, Ghana Police Services, Immigration Service, Customs Excise Protective Service and Civil Aviation Authority on maritime and airport drug interdiction. See: United States Department of State, Bureau of International Narcotics and Law Enforcement Affairs, *International Narcotics Control Strategy Report*, 2005, 536.

law enforcement's interdiction capacity. Though these were "train-the-trainer" programs and did not involve direct assistance to counternarcotics operations, it provided 30 officers crucial knowledge about counternarcotics operations thus giving officers the ability to pass this knowledge on.<sup>60</sup> Ghana's initial state capacity allowed law enforcement to absorb the train-the-trainer programs and to employ the drug itemizers and adjust to the changing demands of the interdiction.<sup>61</sup> By examining Table 1 on page 21 there is a noticeable increase in drug seizures at Kotoka international airport beginning in 2005 following the training, technical assistance and equipment described above that was provided in 2003-2004.

In response to the demonstrated ability of the Ghanaian state to effectively absorb international drug interdiction assistance in the past, and growing concern about the volume of drug trafficking through the region, Ghana and the UK launched "Operation Westbridge" in November 2006. The program was initiated at the request of the Government of Ghana and was designed to station British customs officers alongside their Ghanaian counterparts in Kotoka International Airport to train and mentor Ghanaian customs officers on counternarcotics detection and intelligence techniques.<sup>62</sup> Without the ability to enter into a partnership with trained, capable Ghanaian law enforcement personnel along with the infrastructure within Kotoka International Airport to support the program, it would not have gotten off the ground.<sup>63</sup>

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<sup>60</sup> INCSR, 2005, 536.

<sup>61</sup> Operation Westbridge did not start until the Fall of 2006 and the Joint Port Control Unit under the UNODC/World Customs Organization Global Container Control Program started in 2008.

<sup>62</sup> Operation Westbridge is a U.K. led joint counternarcotics interdiction, through the U.K. Ministry of Justice and H.M. Revenue & Customs. The operation based in Kotoka International Airport provides training and a cadre of British law enforcement officers rotating in and out of Ghana. In addition to the benefits of interdiction before narcotics reach the U.K. an advantage to this operation is that the costs are offset by reducing the need to prosecute and imprison offenders in the U.K., See for example, Aning, Kwesi Dr., and Dr. A. Sarjoh Bah, "ECOWAS and Conflict Prevention in West Africa: Confronting the Triple Threat," Center on International Cooperation, NYU; and Steven Shukor, "UK Joins Ghana in War on Smugglers," *BBC online*, November 21, 2007, [http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/uk\\_news/england/london/7105859.stm](http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/uk_news/england/london/7105859.stm) (Accessed January 18, 2011).

<sup>63</sup> Operation Westbridge Factsheet, provided to author by the Drug Enforcement Agency, Accra, Ghana indicates that in its first two months of operation in the fall of 2006, the program led to arrest of 12 suspects at KIA and the seizure of 24 kilograms of cocaine, of 2,048 kilograms seized in 2006.

When this program was initiated, evidence suggested that when British law enforcement officials were absent, interdiction rates at KIA declined. British law enforcement officials were stationed on a rotational basis with their Ghanaian counterparts, which left gaps in British oversight during change-over of personnel. Interdiction success fell dramatically during the gaps in coverage from one British crew to the next. For example, during the period of July 15, 2007 and September 17, 2007, Ghanaian law enforcement did not register any drug seizures while operatives in the U.K. registered narcotics 36 seizures of Ghanaian origin. One sees a similar pattern before the Christmas holidays in 2007 when Ghanaian drug seizures stopped. This is likely due to the absence of British operatives who were rotating out or on holiday and did not provide oversight during these periods. This suggests that though Ghanaian law enforcement officials had received training and international assistance in the past, in the first year of Westbridge, Ghana was not absorbing international assistance to increase its own interdiction capability, but simply providing a platform for British officials to interdict in Ghana.<sup>64</sup> As was the case with earlier donations of atomizers and train the trainer programs, there was a lag time before the Ghanaian institutions were able to effectively absorb the assistance provided. However, by 2008 Operation Westbridge found its feet and the domestic interdiction rate rebounded to 75%. Since 2006, Operation Westbridge has netted a total of 965 kilograms of cocaine at Kotoka International Airport (Table 1).

Pre-Operation Westbridge			Operation Westbridge (Nov 2006-2010)			
2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010
13	65	40	74*	105	73	50

Table 1. Drug Seizures at KIA before/after Westbridge<sup>65</sup>

<sup>64</sup> This trend of drops in Ghanaian success rate during the absence of British personnel was confirmed by a source with knowledge of Westbridge operations that wished to remain anonymous.

<sup>65</sup> Figures represent the consolidation of UNODC Bi-Annual Seizure reports for each period and the Operation Westbridge Drug seizure factsheet. \*The figure of 74 includes 12 seizures made in Nov-Dec 2006. The decline in seizures beginning in 2009 is reflective of the trend seen throughout the region.

Ghana had an established record of successful interdiction using its own law enforcement capabilities and technical assistance training from the U.S. prior to the inauguration of Operation Westbridge in November 2006. Beginning in 2007, however, there was also clearly an increase in the overall number of drug seizures at KIA indicating that the introduction of Operation Westbridge has had an intervening causal affect on state capacity to interdict narcotics. This program has only succeeded, however, when capable Ghanaian law enforcement officials have been committed to its success. As senior law enforcement advisor of the UNODC stated, “Ghana is quite well trusted by the international partners. Typically, it is the U.K. and the U.S. that are involved in operations and both trust their Ghanaian counterparts. The Ghanaian law enforcement officials who are involved in these operations are relatively easy to cooperate and coordinate with.”<sup>66</sup>

Ghanaian law enforcement also has had limited interdiction success as a result of a Joint Port Control Unit under the UNODC/World Customs Organization Global Container Control Program at the port of Tema inaugurated in October 2008. The program is led by the Ghana Narcotics Control board as an interagency effort that combines the efforts of Ghanaian police with the Bureau of National Investigation, customs officials and the Ghana Ports and Harbors Authority. Prior to the establishment of the JPCU, Ghanaian law enforcement had negligible maritime interdiction capabilities. This program involved UNODC and World Customs Organization as the lead officials providing Ghanaian law enforcement officials training on investigative and profiling techniques to recognize risk indicators on incoming shipments. Table 2 shows the narcotics interdictions that have resulted from the JPCU program. The decline in JPCU seizures from 2009 to 2010 is most likely the result of the overall downward trends in seizures across the region that was noticeable after the peak of seizures in 2006 and the increasing use of alternate means of transportation, such as specially equipped aircraft flying into remote landing strips in locations such as Guinea-Bissau and the Sahel region to avoid detection.

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<sup>66</sup> Flemming Quist, Senior Law Enforcement Advisor, UNODC, Interview, September 8, 2010.

Before Joint Port Control Unit					After JPCU	
2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010
0	0	30 kg (1 seizure)	0	0	226 kg (2 seizures)	130 kg (1 seizure)

Table 2. Maritime Cocaine Seizures before and after JPCU<sup>67</sup>

The JPCU program like Operation Westbridge was at the request of the Government of Ghana and leverages the expertise of international law enforcement while building on the foundation of existing domestic agencies. Like Operation Westbridge this program has had a causal impact on Ghana's interdiction success, but the data is less convincing. Prior to this program being put in place the only maritime narcotics interdiction recorded by Ghanaian authorities was 30 kilograms seized from the MV Benjamin in 2006. Three seizures is certainly not enough to establish a long-term positive trend, especially since anecdotal evidence suggests drug trafficking organizations have recently changed their smuggling methods. However, it does illustrate a further example of the absorptive capacity of the Ghanaian state of another international counternarcotics partnership.

Beginning in 2009, judicial capacity building efforts through the U.S. State Department the Bureau of International Narcotics and Law Enforcement (INL) funded through the U.S. State Department instituted a program to put a prosecutor within the Ghanaian Ministry of Justice to assist with investigating and prosecuting cases to help improve the judicial system capacity.<sup>68</sup> It is likely to improve the backlog of narcotics trafficking cases that has been a consistent shortfall. International agreements with the

<sup>67</sup> From three sources: 72 kilograms reported in UNODC Press Release, "UNODC Training Leads to Drugs Seizure at Ghanaian Port," <http://www.unodc.org/unodc/en/press/releases/2009/May/2009-22-05.html>. (Accessed January 20, 2011); 154 kilogram seizure, September 1, 2009 reported in U.S. State Dept. INSCR 2010, 298; 130 kilograms reported by Gibbah G. Blay, "Big Cocaine Haul at Tema Port," *The Ghanaian Times*, October 19, 2010 <http://www.newtimes.com.gh/story/2475> (Accessed January 20, 2011).

<sup>68</sup> The program is estimated to be funding at \$330,000 through the INL. See: United States Department of State, Bureau of International Narcotics and Law Enforcement Affairs, *International Narcotics Control Strategy Report*, 2010, 301.



United States also resulted in the donation by the Department of Defense of two trace itemizers for detection of drug couriers at KIA. The itemizers have been in use since January of 2010, and although it was not possible to determine how many of the 50 seizures at KIA in 2010 were the result of this equipment, the Executive Secretary of NACOB asserted that their systematic use has acted as a deterrent to drug mules travelling through KIA.<sup>69</sup> The Department of Defense also funded the construction of an evidence facility that was completed in September of 2010 and will be fully operational by February 2011.<sup>70</sup> It is hoped that this facility will improve law enforcement's capacity to conduct searches and secure evidence. It is too early to tell at this point what these measure of capacity building have brought to the Ghanaian counternarcotics effort, but it indicates that the programs being implemented are targeting key weaknesses beyond simply interdicting the supply of drugs.

Each of these international partnership arrangements has relied on the presence of adequately trained/committed personnel in Ghana, particularly in the law enforcement community to make these programs operational. Ghana Police Services possesses basic law enforcement training capability through the Ghana Police College.<sup>71</sup> Thus law enforcement has an adequate level of skill to engage successfully in these kinds of capacity building partnerships. In summary, the domestic narcotics interdiction rate versus those of Ghanaian origin interdicted elsewhere was the result of initial state capacity, which allowed for effective absorption of training, guidance and oversight provided by international partners.

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<sup>69</sup> Mark-Anthony Vinorko, "Drug Trafficking Arrests Go Down," *The Daily Graphic (Ghana)*, July 28, 2010.

<sup>70</sup> Peter D. Burgess, Strategy and Plans, Counternarcotics & Law Enforcement Assistance US AFRICOM, e-mail response to author's inquiry, January 12, 2011.

<sup>71</sup> Ghana Police Services Website <http://www.ghanapolice.info/college.htm>. (Accessed March 7, 2010).

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### **III. GUINEA-BISSAU**

This chapter will show that the low level of state capacity in Guinea-Bissau has been an obstacle to drug interdiction as well as to absorbing international assistance that might improve its performance. No “war” on drugs has been waged in Guinea-Bissau because the state institutions responsible for mounting a counternarcotics strategy lack the institutional capacity to develop the skills, acquire the resources, and garnering the support necessary to build interdiction capacity. As with the previous chapter, the following analysis considers both the impact of state capacity and external assistance on interdiction performance in Guinea-Bissau.

#### **A. NARCOTICS INTERDICTION GUINEA-BISSAU**

Although it is known that drugs were being trafficking through Guinea-Bissau as early as 2002–2003, drug interdictions known to be of Guinea-Bissau origin were first recorded in 2006, and the number of known origin interdictions remained low thereafter.<sup>72</sup> The rate for 2006 is based on one drug seizure of 674 kilograms by the Bissau-Guinean Judicial Police, and two seizures in Europe (See Figure 2). Despite the low number of seizures, it was widely believed that drugs were routinely being trafficked through Guinea-Bissau based on the number of Bissau-Guinean suspects caught elsewhere and law enforcement intelligence that traffickers were using Guinea-Bissau as a transshipment point. The small number of known cases of Bissau-Guinean origin is the result of geographic factors. Guinea-Bissau is a very small country, with limited commercial airline traffic to Europe. As a result, traffickers often move cocaine across the border into Guinea-Conakry or Senegal to board commercial flights, which make it difficult to definitively track the origin of the drugs. A final factor is the lack of adequate

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<sup>72</sup> Senegalese authorities interdicted two large shipments of cannabis in 2002 and two large shipments of coca leaf bound for Guinea-Bissau in 2003. An average of 19 suspects of Bissau-Guinean origin were arrested for drug trafficking annually from 2003-2005. The average number of suspects of Bissau-Guinean origin arrested annually increased to 43 per year from 2006-2010, indicating there was a growing quantity of drug trafficking through Guinea-Bissau, but the origin of these cases were not reported to the UNODC. It is not to known whether the suspects came through Guinea-Bissau or another transshipment point. In the interests of consistency with the previous case study, this research only included cases where the known origin of the drug trafficking case was reported.

record keeping by Guinea-Bissau. Based on law enforcement intelligence, the volume of drug trafficking through Guinea-Bissau is higher than the statistics indicate due to the limitations of the available drug seizure data. Much of the cocaine moving through Guinea-Bissau is likely to be recorded to be of Guinea-Conakry or Senegal origin. This in turn means that the interdiction rate linked to Guinea-Bissau is likely understated, since European seizures of cocaine originating in Guinea-Bissau are likely to be divided among Bissau, Conakry, and Senegal in the database. On the other hand, poor record keeping in Guinea-Bissau may lead to inaccurate reporting of domestic seizures, which could partially correct the bias in the other direction.<sup>73</sup> On balance, despite these biases the data are likely to work validating my hypothesis.

The domestic interdiction rate was 33% in 2006, and got worse thereafter. In 2007, the Judicial Police made a single narcotics seizure of 635 kilograms of cocaine, which represented 7.7% of the 13 total cases known to have originated in Guinea-Bissau. Over the course of 2008–2010, 56 interdictions were made in Europe, and only one (a December 2010 seizure of 300 kilograms of cannabis) in Guinea-Bissau.<sup>74</sup>

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<sup>73</sup> The 2010 U.S. State Department INCSR notes “Due to weak enforcement efforts and inadequate record keeping, it is difficult even to assess the accurately the scope of the drug problem,” 313.

<sup>74</sup> “Guinea-Bissau: Marines Seize 300 Kilograms of Marijuana, Two Suspects Arrested,” *Lusa*, (*In Portuguese*), Accessed through OpenSource.gov [https://www.opensource.gov/portal/server.pt/gateway/PTARGS\\_0\\_0\\_200\\_203\\_121123\\_43/content/Display/AFP20101209530002#index=1&searchKey=4594154&rpp=10](https://www.opensource.gov/portal/server.pt/gateway/PTARGS_0_0_200_203_121123_43/content/Display/AFP20101209530002#index=1&searchKey=4594154&rpp=10). (Accessed February 21, 2011).

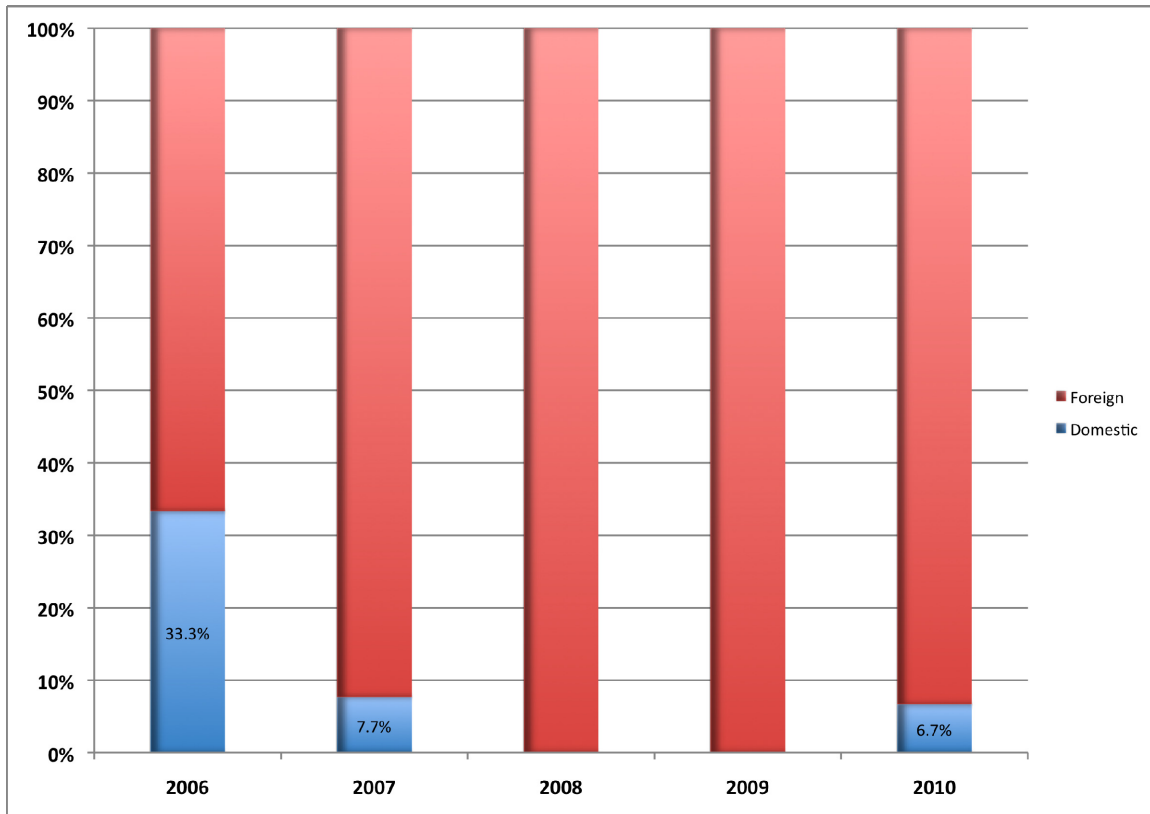


Figure 2. Bissau-Guinean Drug Cases Seized Domestically Vs. Foreign<sup>75</sup>

## B. STATE CAPACITY

Since 2005, Guinea-Bissau has scored 2.5 out of 6 on the World Bank's Country Performance and Institutional Assessment (CPIA) rating for Quality of Public Administration, significantly lower than Ghana.<sup>76</sup> A reflection of this low level of capacity is the fact that Bissau-Guinean law enforcement is severely resource constrained and lacks basic law enforcement equipment and training facilities. In fact, no domestic training

<sup>75</sup> Comparison of known seizures of Bissau-Guinean origin made domestically vs. those reportedly made in foreign countries based on multiple reports from: United Nations Office for Drug Control and Crime Prevention, Supply Reduction and Law Enforcement Section, *Bi-Annual Seizure Reports 2004/1 through 2010/1: Summary of Individual Significant Seizures of Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances, as Reported by Governments*, Vienna: United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, 2004–2010.

<sup>76</sup> World Bank, CPIA Quality of Public Administration Rating, under data, <http://data.worldbank.org/indicator/IQ.CPA.PADM.XQ>. (Accessed January 21, 2011).

facility exists in Guinea-Bissau.<sup>77</sup> A senior law enforcement official with the UNODC characterized the Bissau-Guinean Public Order Police, who have primary responsibility for patrolling the country, as having “very low technical capacity and training.”<sup>78</sup> The Judicial Police, who have primary responsibility for conducting counternarcotics operations, have approximately 180 officers, some of whom have received law enforcement training abroad, but they are hamstrung by having a limited number of vehicles dedicated to conducting counternarcotics operations and frequently do not have fuel to operate them.<sup>79</sup> Remuneration has also been a constant problem within the law enforcement community in Guinea-Bissau with salaries frequently falling into arrears and requiring international assistance to make payroll. From the capacity standpoint, law enforcement has been out-matched by its drug trafficking adversaries due to the inability of the state to provide the funding support and basic necessities of training, equipment and an adequate detention facility needed to carry out its counternarcotics duties.<sup>80</sup> Low law enforcement capacity has had direct negative consequences on the state’s ability to interdict narcotics.

Even the interdiction success, the two large drug seizures reported by the Judicial Police in 2006 and 2007, illustrate the extremely limited institutional capabilities of the Guinea-Bissau state. In the first case, the Judicial Police, acted on intelligence from Interpol, seized 674 kilograms of cocaine and arrested two Columbian suspects that had arrived by plane to a military airstrip in September 2006, taking the drugs and suspects

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<sup>77</sup> Brazil has promised to fund the construction of a police academy, but as of now Guinea-Bissau does not have a domestic training facility. The training that is provided is primarily carried out in Brazil, Portugal and Cape Verde. See, “Guinea-Bissau: UNODC to Support Set-up of Police Academy” [http://www.unodc.org/unodc/en/frontpage/2010/January/guinea-bissau\\_-\\_unodc-to-build-a-police-academy.html](http://www.unodc.org/unodc/en/frontpage/2010/January/guinea-bissau_-_unodc-to-build-a-police-academy.html). (Accessed February 22, 2011).

<sup>78</sup> Flemming Quist, Interview, September 8, 2010.

<sup>79</sup> A UNODC, report noted the Judicial Police had one vehicle as of 2007; see *Drug Trafficking as a Security Threat in West Africa*, 36. James Traub noted that the French government recently donated three vehicles; see “Africa’s Drug Problem.” *New York Times Magazine*, April 9, 2010, <http://www.nytimes.com/2010/04/11/magazine/11Trade-t.html?pagewanted=all>. (Accessed February 22, 2011); Flemming Quist noted that 5 Toyota Land Cruisers and 10 motorcycles were procured in February 2009.

<sup>80</sup> U.S. State Dept., Human Rights Report 2008.

into custody.<sup>81</sup> In the second case, in April 2007, the Judicial Police seized 635 kilograms of cocaine in the last vehicle of a four-vehicle convoy that had just off-loaded a major shipment of cocaine from an aircraft at a military landing strip, taking two Columbian suspects and two Bissau-Guinean military officers into custody.<sup>82</sup> In the 2006 case, the Judicial Police facility where the suspects and cocaine were being held was surrounded by heavily armed military officers, who took custody of the cocaine, ostensibly to transport it to a safe in the Ministry of Finance.<sup>83</sup> The drugs later disappeared from the Interior Ministry facility and the two the Columbian suspects were released on bail and fled the country. To this point, this case is similar to the MV Benjamin case in Ghana in which a large quantity of drugs went missing. However, the follow up diverges dramatically. Bissau-Guinean Law enforcement officials and Ministers were implicated, but no charges were brought.<sup>84</sup> The Ministry of Justice provided no legal reason for releasing the Columbian suspects, who never stood trial, and simply called their flight “regrettable.”<sup>85</sup> All state institutions involved demonstrated insufficient capacity to perform basic functions beyond the initial arrest of the suspects.

In the second case, in 2007, the Judicial Police arrested two Columbian suspects affiliated with the FARC and two Guinea-Bissau military officers, and were able to retain possession of the evidence.<sup>86</sup> However, the other three vehicles in the convoy, estimated to be carrying two tons of cocaine, escaped because “the Judicial Police did not have vehicles to give chase”<sup>87</sup> As with the previous case, the Columbian suspects were released on bail, while the two military officers were turned over to military jurisdiction.

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<sup>81</sup> UNODC, “Cocaine Trafficking in West Africa: The Threat to Stability and Development (With Special Reference to Guinea-Bissau), 15.

<sup>82</sup> Flemming Quist, Interview with author.

<sup>83</sup> “Cocaine Trafficking in West Africa: The Threat to Stability,” 15.

<sup>84</sup> Human Rights Report 2008: Guinea-Bissau, U.S. State Department, <http://www.state.gov/g/drl/rls/hrrpt/2008/af/119006.htm>. (Accessed February 24, 2011).

<sup>85</sup> UNODC, “Cocaine Trafficking in West Africa: The Threat to Stability and Development (With Special Reference to Guinea-Bissau).

<sup>86</sup> Stephen Ellis, “West Africa’s International Drug Trade” *African Affairs*, 108, no. 431, (2009), 192.

<sup>87</sup> UNODC, “Cocaine Trafficking in West Africa: The Threat to Stability and Development (With Special Reference to Guinea-Bissau), 15; Joseph Winter, Africa New Front in Drugs War, BBC online, 9 July 07, (Accessed December 12, 2010), <http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/africa/6274590.stm>.

Once again, all suspects were released with no justification, suggesting that authorities were threatened and/or paid off and again demonstrating very low levels of institutional capacity to successfully carry a case from arrest to prosecution. Despite the high profile nature of this case and the inexplicable release of the suspects the government of Guinea-Bissau did not launch a formal inquiry. It is known, however, that the head of the Judicial Police, Orlando Antonio da Silva, attempted to investigate the case, and was met with death threats, reprimanded by Interior Minister Baciro Dabo, and ultimately fired from his post.<sup>88</sup>

More generally, Bissau-Guinean Judge André Lima reported that the “military has impunity and we have no protection” when it comes to prosecuting narcotics cases.<sup>89</sup> Even in the most high profile narcotics cases, the Bissau-Guinean state is unable to uphold the rule of law. Judges and prosecutors are poorly paid and trained, lack protection from threats and are highly susceptible to corruption.<sup>90</sup> Between 2005 and 2009 there is no record of drug trafficking cases that were successfully prosecuted.<sup>91</sup> The utter lack of state capacity from arrest to prosecution and imprisonment has had a negative impact on the ability interdict narcotics.

### **C. INTERNATIONAL PARTNERSHIPS**

International partnerships have played a marginal role in counternarcotics operations in Guinea-Bissau. The fundamental lack of state capacity has constrained the ability to absorb the programs that have gotten off the ground, and they have not made a positive impact on interdiction. International assistance programs are hampered not only by the low level of state capacity, but also the pervasive atmosphere of political

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<sup>88</sup> Stephen Ellis, “West Africa’s International Drug Trade,” 192.

<sup>89</sup> UNODC, “Cocaine Trafficking in West Africa: The Threat to Stability and Development (With Special Reference to Guinea-Bissau), 15; Joseph Winter, Africa New Front in Drugs War, BBC online, 9 July 07, (Accessed December 12, 2010), <http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/africa/6274590.stm>.

<sup>90</sup> 2008 Human Rights Report: Guinea-Bissau, U.S. State Department.

<sup>91</sup> “Background Paper on Drug Trafficking in Guinea-Bissau,” UN Peacebuilding Commission Country-Specific Configuration on Guinea-Bissau, Thematic Discussion on Drug Trafficking in Guinea-Bissau and Strengthening of the Justice Sector, May 28, 2008, 2; U.S. State Department INCSR 2010; Testimony by Assistant Secretary of African Affairs, Johnnie Carson before the Senate Foreign Relations Subcommittee, June 23, 2009. No data for 2010 arrests/prosecutions is available.



instability present in Guinea-Bissau that has strained the ability to form partnerships. It must be noted, however, that there are limitations to the conclusions that can be drawn about the impact of international partnerships on interdiction, in Guinea-Bissau due to the nature of the partnerships, the timing, and the conditions under which they operate. Nevertheless, there have been several important international partnerships in Guinea-Bissau that have been aimed at getting law enforcement, judicial capacity and detention facilities to an acceptable level. These partnerships have taken the form of: law enforcement and judicial training provided by Portugal, Italy and Brazil with the support of the UNODC, establishment of a specialized counternarcotics unit within the Judicial Police, the prison rehabilitation and a justice administration projects and the West African Coast Initiative.<sup>92</sup>

The government of Portugal, through its institute for development assistance (IPAD) has consistently been the largest single contributors to capacity building efforts within the security and judicial sectors in Guinea-Bissau.<sup>93</sup> For example, from 2006–2009 Portugal has provided fourteen different programs to strengthen judicial capacity including: training courses for magistrates at multiple levels within the judicial system, a program to improve legal education, training to improve the technical and investigative capacity of the supreme court and a program to improve the overall operation of the judicial system.<sup>94</sup> Portugal also worked extensively to provide advanced training to police forces over the course of 2006–2009 and has consistently engaged in law enforcement capacity building despite the political and military instability in Guinea-

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<sup>92</sup> Twentieth Meeting of Heads of National Drug Law Enforcement Agencies, “Current Situation with Respect to Sub regional and Regional Cooperation in Countering Drug Trafficking,” Conference Report, Nairobi, September 13-17, 2010, 1–7.

<sup>93</sup> Portugal has been the single largest contributor of developmental assistance over the period 2006–2009, according to the Organization for Economic Co-Operation and Development, found under StatExtracts, Guinea-Bissau, <http://stats.oecd.org/Index.aspx?DatasetCode=CRSNEW> (Accessed March 8, 2011).

<sup>94</sup> Portugal has contributed approximately \$1.5 million for programs to strengthen the judicial branch over the period 2006–2009. OECD, Statistics.

Bissau.<sup>95</sup> Portugal along with other partner countries also assisted the Government of Guinea-Bissau in developing a counternarcotics operations plan.

Beginning at the end of 2007, the UNODC launched a three part program aimed at building law enforcement training capacity, creating a special counternarcotics unit, and the construction of the country's first police academy. The first two phases are complete and a thirty person counternarcotics unit within the Judicial Police that specializes in combating drug trafficking and organized crime was established beginning in April 2008. In January 2010, the third phase of the program was kicked off with the announcement of a three year construction plan for a 30,000 square foot law enforcement training at a projected cost of \$3 million to be funded by the Brazilian Agency for Cooperation.<sup>96</sup> In the meantime the government of Brazil has been providing advanced law enforcement training at its Brazilian Police Academy since 2008. As of May 2010, seventy-five Guinea-Bissau Judicial Police or approximately half of its force has received advanced law enforcement and management training in anticipation of taking on responsibility for their own police academy.<sup>97</sup>

Guinea-Bissau joined the West African Coast Initiative (WACI) by signing the *Freetown Commitment* in February 2010, as a measure to implement the recommendations of the ECOWAS Regional Response Action Plan for counternarcotics. The primary goal of the WACI is to establish a collaborative interagency approach to law enforcement and intelligence gathering to counteract drug trafficking and other forms of organized crime. Guinea-Bissau along with the other WACI countries: Côte d'Ivoire, Liberia and Sierra Leone, Guinea-Bissau are each tasked with developing a Transnational Crime Unit (TCU) to coordinate with the other member countries in

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<sup>95</sup> Portugal has contributed approximately \$2.5 million for law enforcement capacity building efforts. OECD, Statistics.

<sup>96</sup> "Guinea-Bissau: UNODC To Support Set Up Of Police Academy," UNODC Press Release, January 22, 2010, [http://www.unodc.org/unodc/en/frontpage/2010/January/guinea-bissau\\_-\\_unodc-to-build-a-police-academy.html](http://www.unodc.org/unodc/en/frontpage/2010/January/guinea-bissau_-_unodc-to-build-a-police-academy.html). (Accessed February 28, 2011).

<sup>97</sup> So far 75 Bissau-Guinean Judicial Police have been trained in Brazil as part of law enforcement institutional capacity building efforts. See: "International Cooperation: Brazil Trains Officers Who Will Manage New Police Academy In Guinea-Bissau," UNODC Press Release, May 21, 2010, <http://www.unodc.org/southerncone/en/frontpage/2010/05/21-cooperacao-internacional-brasil-forma-oficiais-que-irao-administrar-academia-de-policia-na-guine-bissau.html>.

fighting organized crime. Guinea-Bissau's WACI management board met for the first time in February 2011 and the TCU only exists on paper at this point. For obvious reasons, this program has yet to yield results because it has yet to get off the ground.

Two refurbished prisons were opened in September 22, 2010, in Mansoa and Bafata as a result of a UNODC sponsored partnership with the Justice Ministry.<sup>98</sup> This will bring the formal prison capacity for the country to 180 prisoners. Two more prisons rebuild projects are planned for the future in Bissau and Cachungo. The problem, however, is there is not yet a cadre of trained prison guards, which is a program that is anticipated in the future with the support of the UNODC. The prisons are certainly a worthwhile capacity building effort but it does not remedy the profound problems with other crucial elements of capacity such as establishing a functioning judicial system that can operate impartially and free from coercion. The UNODC has installed Manuel Pereira as legal advisor within the Ministry of Justice in Guinea Bissau, but it is too early to tell if this will yield results. These measures are certainly warranted in Guinea-Bissau, but they will only prove fruitful if Guinea-Bissau has the capacity to arrest narcotics trafficking suspects, which it apparently is still lacking.

The international partnership that has been in place over the long-term has primarily been the effort of Portugal and though these assistance programs have attempted to build capacity by improving law enforcement training, developing counternarcotics operational plans and strengthening the judicial branch, they have not resulted in a discernable difference in the level of interdiction in Guinea-Bissau. Furthermore, the training the Judicial Police has received in Brazil and the creation of a special counternarcotics unit within the JP have not led to any reported narcotics interdictions. Despite receiving international law enforcement assistance from Portugal in from 2006-2009, the domestic interdiction rate dropped rather than increased. This leads to the conclusion that the low level of state capacity has inhibited the absorption of international assistance and in turn has a negative impact on interdiction.

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<sup>98</sup> "Guinea-Bissau: Two New Prisons to Be Opened on 22 September," *Lusa*, September 20, 2010. [https://www.opensource.gov/portal/server.pt/gateway/PTARGS\\_0\\_0\\_200\\_203\\_121123\\_43/content/Display/AFP20100921503003#index=1&searchKey=4634814&rpp=10](https://www.opensource.gov/portal/server.pt/gateway/PTARGS_0_0_200_203_121123_43/content/Display/AFP20100921503003#index=1&searchKey=4634814&rpp=10). (Accessed February 26, 2011).

As mentioned at the outset, however, there are several problems to applying this causal logic broadly to all the international law enforcement assistance. The first is the nature of the assistance that is being provided to Guinea-Bissau. Since the country lacks its own law enforcement training facilities it stands to reason that most of the training and technical assistance is designed to provide law enforcement with the basic level of training and equipment necessary to carry out its functions. There has been some training specifically geared towards carrying out counternarcotics operations, but they have not made a difference in interdiction. A second problem is that the programs designed to improve the judicial branch and detention facilities have only an ancillary effect on interdiction in the respect that each component is necessary to prosecute and imprison a drug trafficker, but do not directly lead to interdiction success. A third problem is the timing of several of the programs such as the WACI Transnational Crime Units and the national police academy that are still in the developmental stage. Only time will tell if state capacity will be adequate to absorb these programs and ultimately play a positive role in narcotics interdiction efforts. A final problem is that we cannot assess what would have happened to interdiction if more robust hands-on partnerships like Operation Westbridge and JPCU had been attempted in Guinea-Bissau. There are so many pieces to the counternarcotics puzzle that are deficient in Guinea-Bissau it is unlikely that these more robust programs would be possible given the fact that each program relies on a modicum state capacity and stability that are not present in Guinea-Bissau

In summary, the lack of interdiction success rate (DV) is the result of a low level of state capacity (IV) at multiple levels in Guinea-Bissau. The caveats above, notwithstanding, the long-term international effort by the Portuguese to assist in law enforcement capacity building have not resulted in noticeable improvements in interdiction. Guinea-Bissau, is, in fact, caught in an incapacity trap where the crucial pieces in the counternarcotics puzzle are operating at a low level, which is a reflection of the low level of state capacity.

## **IV. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

On the surface, the portrait of Ghana and Guinea-Bissau as havens for narcotics trafficking appears similar because each country is geographically situated in a location that is favorable to transshipment of cocaine to the European market. Each has a coastline that has little or no systematic maritime counternarcotics interdiction capability and each has a network of organized criminal activity that supports narcotics trafficking. The purpose of this research has been to look beyond these similarities. First, to explain the variations in the (DV) interdiction rates in terms of the causal impact of the (IV) of state capacity. Second to assess international partnerships as a potential intervening variable in interdiction success.

This research has shown that the two countries have had different interdiction outcomes that can be explained by variations in the level of state capacity. Beginning in 2005, in Ghana, one begins to see a shift in interdiction patterns with the number of cases resolved domestically increasing against those resolved on foreign soil indicating a higher interdiction success rate. With the exception of 2007 the trend of was consistent from 2005-2010. In Guinea-Bissau law enforcement initially made two large drug seizures in 2006 and 2007 and then there was an absence of any successful drug seizures on the part of Bissau-Guinean authorities until one small, non-cocaine seizure in 2010. Meanwhile the number of cases that originated in Guinea-Bissau that were interdicted elsewhere increased dramatically.

By analyzing these cases comparatively trends emerge about the state capacity of Ghana versus Guinea-Bissau that has had an impact on interdiction. As was expected the higher level of state capacity in Ghana led to higher domestic narcotic interdiction rates whereas low state capacity led to a lower rate in Guinea-Bissau. There was a higher degree of accountability and rule of law in Ghana, in particular, by comparison to Guinea-Bissau. The MV Benjamin case in Ghana and the first large drug seizure in Guinea-Bissau both occurred in 2006 during what counternarcotics experts assert was the peak of trafficking through the region. These cases provide insight into the dynamics of interdiction and state capacity, particularly from the perspective of accountability. Both

cases had problematic outcomes with the disappearance of large quantities of cocaine and the involvement of law enforcement or military officials. In the wake of the MV Benjamin scandal Ghanaian officials were held accountable whereas in Guinea-Bissau no discernable efforts were made to put its house in order. Unlike Ghana where a public commission led by a Supreme Court justice was convened to investigate the case, in Guinea-Bissau coercion and eventually the firing of the official who attempted to investigate, thwarted efforts to bring closure to the case. Furthermore, the follow-on actions in Ghana that included investigations and prosecutions of officers involved in drug trafficking suggests that it has the capacity to impose sanctions on those within their own ranks that is not present in Guinea-Bissau.

By comparison to Ghana, Guinea-Bissau, has severe shortfalls in accountability and rule of law that go far beyond this initial case in 2006. Unlike Ghana's record of prosecuting an average of 40 drug trafficking cases annually since 2001, there is no record of successful cases of drug trafficking that were carried from arrest to prosecution and imprisonment during the period 2005-2009. In fact, judicial capacity is indicative of capacity problems that exist at every level of this process in Guinea-Bissau. Unlike Ghana where a domestic police academy is established, the Bissau-Guinean Judicial Police and Public Order Police do not have a domestic training capacity and must rely on external support from Portugal, Brazil and the UNODC to provide basic law enforcement training. This has severely limited the degree to which Guinea-Bissau can build law enforcement capacity domestically. Though Ghana's law enforcement training capacity lacks the facilities to absorb its projected recruits under its five-year plan and lacks a criminal investigation division training facility, its law enforcement community has the basic building blocks in place to expand to meet its goals if the financial resources are available.

Both countries are resource constrained from the law enforcement perspective, and have shortfalls in equipment, which is characteristic of many of the West African countries confronting drug trafficking. Taken at face value this factor does not seem to have explanatory power because it is pervasive in both countries and many others in the region. The difference, however, is the severe degree to which Guinea-Bissau is resource

constrained. The Government of Guinea-Bissau lacks the capacity to provide the basic necessities of law enforcement equipment such as vehicles, fuel and the ability to regularly pay its police forces on its own. Compounding the problem is the fact that even if law enforcement had the capability to arrest a suspect, find an impartial prosecutor free from threats and coercion and convict an offender, there was no prison facility capable of housing an inmate until late 2010. The extremely low level of capacity at multiple levels has had a negative impact on interdiction in Guinea-Bissau that is not present to the same degree in Ghana.

A comparative analysis of the capacity of the state to absorb international partnerships and assistance revealed that in the case of Ghana, the state was able absorb several international assistance programs involving training, technical assistance, equipment and two major programs: Operation Westbridge and the JPCU. The results for Ghana showed that there were discernable improvements in interdiction as a result of the capacity of the state to absorb these programs and work successfully with international partners. Guinea-Bissau was less successful applying international assistance in the form of law enforcement training and judicial and detention facility reform, but the evidence is much less conclusive that there is a causal link between the state capacity to absorb international assistance and lack of interdiction. In Ghana, there were quantifiable increases in interdiction after receiving drug atomizer equipment and training through the International Criminal Investigative Training Assistance Program (ICITAP) in 2003-2004. Similarly there was a noticeable increase in interdiction at Kotoka International Airport after Operation Westbridge was put in place. The Joint Port Control Unit has also proven to be somewhat effective at interdiction in the port of Tema, though there have been a limited number of seizures since the program kicked off.

By comparison Guinea-Bissau has received law enforcement and judicial system training from Portugal throughout the period of study and has not shown an increase in narcotics interdiction. The other international partnerships such as the UNODC project to create a special counternarcotics unit, the West African Coast Initiative and the UNODC prison and judicial reform projects have only come online recently. The causal claim that the inability of the Government of Guinea-Bissau to absorb these programs as

an intervening factor is not, however, fully supported by the evidence. One would expect that the training programs provided by Portugal and Brazil to train Judicial Police would lead to higher levels of interdiction, but so far it has not yielded quantifiable results. On the other hand, it must be noted that Guinea-Bissau has not received the same type of long-term assistance specifically aimed at counternarcotics that one sees in Ghana, like Operation Westbridge and the JPCU that is built upon a pre-existing foundation of domestic law enforcement capacity. Although some programs are specifically aimed at counternarcotics the majority of the programs in Guinea-Bissau are aimed at fundamental capacity building blocks such as providing the police force with the basic tools and training to patrol the country and assisting with judicial reforms and a means to detain criminals. The impact of international assistance has also been impeded by the unstable political/military situation in Guinea-Bissau during the period of study that was not present in Ghana.

The extremely problematic situation between the senior military and political leaders in Guinea-Bissau is an additional factor that speaks to capacity and has impeded interdiction success. In March 2009 President Nino Vieira and General Batista Tagmé Na Waíé were assassinated and over two years later the perpetrators have not been brought to justice. Additionally, the events of April 1, 2010 involving a mutiny by senior military officers underscore a fundamental lack of state capacity to maintain stability, a system of checks and balances and respect for the rule of law. The inability of the state to build counternarcotics interdiction capacity is, in fact, a reflection of the weakness and lack of capacity at the highest echelons of the government of Guinea-Bissau. In the aftermath of the events of April 1, 2010, the ringleader of the mutiny, General Antonio Injai assumed the position of Army Chief of Staff with the blessing of President Sanhá. Furthermore, the reinstatement of former Navy Chief of Staff, José Americo Bubo Na Tchuto and Ibraima Papa Camara as Air Force Chief of Staff, both of whom are drug kingpins according to U.S. Department of Treasury, were returned the country to the status quo as far as drug trafficking.<sup>99</sup> These events reflect a lack of capacity of the state to hold senior officials accountable. These events illustrate that the country has not moved “beyond the

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<sup>99</sup> “Treasury Designates Two Narcotics Traffickers in Guinea-Bissau.”



rule of the gun,” and it has put an end to EU sponsored SSR that could have improved the situation.<sup>100</sup> This also calls into question whether capacity building efforts through external partners will have success moving forward given the atmosphere of impunity that the military is operating in.

In keeping with the focus of the questions asked at the outset of this research about variations in interdiction, what lessons can be learned and how this research relates to the debates brought up in the literature discussed in Chapter I, there are several conclusions that can be made. The first is that a relatively high level of state capacity is a crucial element that must be present as an enabler to mounting an effective counternarcotics interdiction strategy. Clearly there are wide discrepancies in state capacity between the two countries researched as illustrated by the different CPIA public administration ratings as well as the anecdotal evidence related to specific cases and elements of capacity. These factors must be taken into account by policymakers attempting to create and implement counternarcotics strategies. A one-size fits all approach to interdiction will not apply equally well to all countries in West Africa. Some countries like Ghana have proven to be a more viable partner in the “War on Drugs” in West Africa than Guinea-Bissau, despite the fact that both share similar geographic challenges, problems with corruption and resource constraints. Policymakers should take into account that counternarcotics investments in a country that lacks state capacity is unlikely to yield positive results and may, in fact, create a perverse incentive for those countries that lack capacity to do little to deter drug trafficking in an attempt to garner assistance. Strategists and policymakers should take into account that a much higher level of hands-on assistance and mentorship that goes far beyond counternarcotics is required for countries like Guinea-Bissau and this can only succeed in an environment of political and military stability.

The second conclusion in keeping with the debate in the literature is the assertion that interdiction of drugs will not “win” the War on Drugs in a way that will eliminate narcotics from the trafficking pipeline, but will merely shift drug trafficking patterns and

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<sup>100</sup> Guinea-Bissau: Beyond Rule of the Gun,” *Crisis Group Africa Briefing*, International Crisis Group, no. 61, (June 25, 2009), 1.

concealment methods. There is merit to this argument, as drugs have continued to flow through West Africa to the European consumer market through both countries researched in this study despite efforts at interdiction. The balloon effect is certainly a factor in West Africa where applying an interdiction solution to the problem may merely squeeze the balloon and shift the drug trafficking to other countries within the region that have lower capacity to counteract the problem. The goal of interdiction as a pillar of a counternarcotics strategy in West Africa, however, needs to be seen as a tool to be used as a deterrent to criminal organizations and as a means to mitigate the impact of narcotics trafficking on the rates of violent crime, state security, and economic impacts. The states that are the most adept at mitigating these impacts are those that have a high enough degree of state capacity to pursue a comprehensive counternarcotics strategy that includes the ability to work with international partners.

In keeping with another theme of the literature, it must be noted that interdiction is only one part of the solution. While demand-reduction solutions have not been the focus of this research, policymakers must consider this element because it represents a second front in the “Drug War” and it is one that is largely out of the control of the West African states dealing with problems of narcotics trafficking. Though there is growing concern over local consumption of cocaine in West African countries the primary consumers of cocaine trafficked through West Africa are Europeans. Therefore, policymakers must consider that looking beyond the reasons such as overall state weakness, porous borders and lack of capacity in West Africa, one of the primary driving factors for why cocaine is being transshipped through the region is the burgeoning European demand for cocaine. Interdiction is certainly a key component to mitigating the problem in West Africa, but it will not solve the problem of the growing demand.

More specifically to problem at hand in Ghana, the international community needs to realize that Ghana appears to be doing well in counternarcotics relative to its regional counterparts, in part, because so few countries in West Africa have shown a long-term pattern of success. The greatest area for improvement in narcotics interdiction for Ghana like many of its West African counterparts is in the maritime domain where the bulk of the cocaine is coming ashore in the country and the borders where much of

the cocaine is leaving the country. The JPCU set up by the UN and the World Customs Organization has proven to be a worthwhile endeavor in interdicting shipments of cocaine and other contraband once it reaches the port of Tema, but it leaves the majority of Ghana's 335 mile coastline susceptible to traffickers who have a wealth of options for getting cocaine on shore elsewhere. Many of Ghana's counterparts are faced with the similar problem of the need to expand maritime and border counternarcotics operations. It remains to be seen if Ghana and international partners will enter into arrangements to tackle these areas because of the magnitude of manpower and resources needed to set up comprehensive counternarcotics operations for these domains.

The Republic of Guinea-Bissau will not be able to make progress in combating drug trafficking in the near-term. Aid or some form of international support in Guinea-Bissau appears to be necessary, but it is creating a perverse incentive, or a form of counternarcotics aid "rent" for the government of Guinea-Bissau. The country's continuing instability and its role as a safe haven for drug trafficking bolsters the perception that more attention and potentially more aid is warranted. The appointments of José Americo "Bubo" Na Tchuto, Ibraima "Papa" Camara, and Antonio Indjai to senior military positions despite their dubious pasts were not simply moves of appeasement on the part of the civilian leaders towards their much stronger and dangerous military counterparts. These moves were aimed at eliciting a response from the international community, attention and ultimately aid to combat drug trafficking. However it has undermined the country's reputation as a viable partner in the war on drugs.

International assistance appears to be a necessity in both countries, but major problems remain unresolved in Guinea-Bissau. The first problem, is whether or not aid can be applied effectively in Guinea-Bissau when so many elements of state capacity are deficient. The country has shown an inability to deliver basic public goods, enforce the rule of law and lacks control over its oversized military that operates in an environment of impunity. In the absence of an effective reform of the military in Guinea-Bissau, it remains debatable as to whether expanding aid toward counternarcotics programs will be successful given the atmosphere of impunity that the military operates in the country.

The second problem is, given the recurrent political instability in Guinea-Bissau; the international community will find it difficult to find “a credible set of actors and institutions with which to work.”<sup>101</sup>

Bolstering law enforcement capacity, equipment, training, penal and judicial system is necessary. However, it will not be enough to correct the underlying problems of state weakness. External assistance should be aimed at fundamental capacity building in the tools of good governance and enforcing the rule of law, first along with security sector reform to reduce and professionalize the military. The U.N. Security Council has recognized this and renewed the mandate for the United Nations Integrated Peace building Office in Guinea-Bissau under resolution 1949 (2010) through December 2011. Among the many parts of this resolution it stresses, “the continued support of the United Nations and the international community for the long-term security and development of Guinea-Bissau, particularly in the fields of security sector reform, justice and in building the capacity of the government to tackle illicit drug trafficking.”<sup>102</sup> The EU, for its part has ended its SSR program due to the instability after the attempted coup, April 1, 2010.

From the perspective of mitigating the impact of narcotics in Guinea-Bissau, it is a much better option in the near-term to ramp up maritime interdiction operations with reliable and trustworthy international partners who are equipped to do maritime counternarcotics operations and do not face the same challenges as Guinea-Bissau. The challenge with this option is that there is very little maritime capacity in the region beyond a few countries and a great deal of coastline to cover. This also does not solve the problem with aircraft using remote airstrips as a means to traffic drugs into the country. Another option is to continue to strengthen counternarcotics operations nearby with countries in the region that are already demonstrating the will and capacity to tackle the problem such as Cape Verde and look into the possibility of increasing the role of its ECOWAS peers as a form of mentorship in countering narcotics.

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<sup>101</sup> Mathew V. Sousa, interviewed by author.

<sup>102</sup> “Security Council Renews Mandate of United Nations Integrated Peace building Office: In Guinea-Bissau Until December 31, 2011, Concerned at Persistent Instability,” UN Security Council Press Release, 6428<sup>th</sup> Security Council Meeting, 23 Nov 10.

A program along the lines of Operation Westbridge through a bi-lateral arrangement with the UK should be avoided in Guinea-Bissau for several reasons. The bulk of the cocaine flowing into and out of Guinea-Bissau is not arriving by commercial airliner via Bissau. Guinea-Bissau offers a variety of trafficking options that are difficult to counteract, a relatively long unpatrolled coastline with 80+ islands that are not policed, remote landing strips, porous borders with its neighbors and a government that lacks the basic level of law enforcement capacity to counteract trafficking through any of these domains. A program like Westbridge would only target the relatively small amount of air traffic from Osvaldo Vieira International Airport to Portugal, Senegal, Guinea and Cape Verde. In short, attempting to interdict narcotics in Guinea-Bissau is fighting an uphill battle and the government is not providing any high ground in the fight. As counternarcotics expert Peter Burgess summed it up, “Guinea-Bissau is simply faced with a perfect storm of an ideal geography and location for smugglers, a desperately poor country and sufficient corruption to dishearten most international organizations.”<sup>103</sup>

There are limits to what kind of assistance the U.S. can give to Guinea-Bissau, and it remains a low priority. United States policymakers are more interested in the threat of transnational terrorism than drug trafficking. Although there’s a growing concern that trafficking activities in West Africa are supporting groups like AQIM, the threat is not taken seriously enough. Despite the risk of a drug trafficking organization linking to terrorist organizations, it is unlikely that the U.S. will engage in long-term counternarcotics assistance programs in Guinea-Bissau until they emerge as a trusted partner, the country exhibits a track record of political and military stability and re-establish respect for the rule of law. Ultimately, the member countries of the CPLP, ECOWAS and the UNODC and its partner nations will need to burden a great deal of responsibility for providing technical assistance and training for law enforcement, as they have in the past, but it is doubtful that a law enforcement approach alone will bring about successful interdiction programs with all the capacity problems with which Guinea-Bissau and many countries in the region are contending.

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<sup>103</sup> Peter D. Burgess, Strategy and Plans, Counternarcotics & Law Enforcement Assistance US AFRICOM, Interviewed by author.

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